

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 OPIC-12

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R 290800Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5455

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1311

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, DM, FR

SUBJECT: NEW LOOK IN FRANCO-DAHOMEAN RELATIONS

1. FRENCH SECSTATE IN MFA FOR COOPERATION, JEAN FRANCOIS DENIAU, ENDED THREE-DAY VISIT TO DAHOMEY AUGUST 25. IN COURSE OF TWO WELL PUBLICIZED PRESS CONFERENCES AND IN FORMAL REMARKS AT DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOR BY PRESIDENT KEREKOU, DENIAU EMPHASIZED READINESS OF FRANCE TO REVISE COOPERATION ACCORDS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CHANGES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED SINCE THEIR SIGNING TWELVE YEARS AGO. ACCORDING FRENCH AMBASSADOR VAN GREVENYNGHE, DENIAU TOLD DAHOMEANS IN UNAMBIGUOUS TERMS THAT FRANCE IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE HER ASSISTANCE IF DAHOMEANS WANT HER TO DO SO, AND THAT IF NOT, FRENCH WILL LEAVE WITH NO HARD FEELINGS. SAME MESSAGE CAME THROUGH IN SOMEWHAT MUTED FORM IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

2. ON QUESTION OF AID AND INVESTMENTS, DENIAU AFFIRMED THAT THERE IS NO FRENCH "CHASSE GARDEE" IN AFRICA. OBVIOUSLY, HE SAID, "FRANCE

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ALONE CAN NOT MEET THE GROWING NEEDS OF THE CONTINENT." IN COMMENT-

ING ON FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARDS DAHOMEAN REVOLUTION, DENIAU CONFIRMED GOF POLICY OF NON-INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF COUNTRIES. SAID EACH MUST FIND ITS OWN WAY, AND THE CHOICE OF DAHOMEY RESTS WITH DAHOMEY.

3. IN TOAST AT DINNER HONORING DRMNIAU, PRESIDENT KEREKOU POINTEDLY REAFFIRMED THAT DAHOMEAN REVOLUTION, WHICH IS AGAINST NO ONE OR NO COUNTRY, IS ONLY AIMED AT DEFENDING LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF COUNTRY, ASSERTING NATIONAL CHARACTER, AND AT INSISTING ON RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE BY FRIENDS AND PARTNERS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH DAHOMEY. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE BASIC POLICY STATEMENT OF NOVEMBER 30, 1972 (COTONOU 1366), KEREKOU INDICATED WITHOUT SETTING DATE THAT MRGD READY MOVE AHEAD WITH REVISION OF ACCORDS, AND HOPED IT COULD COUNT ON GOF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING DAHOMEY'S SPECIFIC NEEDS. KEREKOU COMPLIMENTED DENIAU PERSONALLY FOR FINE REPUTATION HE HAD ENJOYED AMONG AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVES WHEN HE WAS AT EEC, AND SAID THIS BODES WELL FOR FUTURE FRENCH COOPERATION.

4. COMMENTING FURTHER ON NATURE OF FRENCH AID AND ON HIS DISCUSSIONS IN DAHOMEY, DENIAU POINTED OUT THAT IN RECENT YEARS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DAHOMEY HAD GROWN TO LEVEL OF 3 BILLION CFA FRANCS PER YEAR (\$14 MILLION) WITH SOME 350 FRENCH PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. PROGRAM HAS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT WITH CONCENTRATION ON PALM PRODUCTS AND COTTON. FRENCH AID HAS ALSO BEEN IMPORTANT IN FIELD OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, TECHNICAL TRAINING AND INFORMATION. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED NEW FRENCH BUILT TV STATION WHICH HAS BEEN READY FOR 9-10 MONTHS. ALSO INDICATED THAT FRANCE HAS BEEN ASKED CONSIDER PROVISION OF A MORE POWERFUL RADIO TRANSMITTER WHICH WILL CARRY "LA VOIX DE LA REVOLUTION" TO NORTHERN DAHOMEY. IN PAST, NORTHERNERS HAVE POINTED TO FACT THAT RADIO ONLY SERVES SOUTH AS EVIDENCE OF NEGLECT OF NORTH AND FAVORITISM BEING AWARDED SOUTHERN PART OF COUNTRY. AS NORTHERNER, KEREKOU NO DOUBT SEES EXTENSION OF RADIO SERVICE TO WHOLE COUNTRY AS

HELPFUL POLITICAL PLOY, DEMONSTRATING HIS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN FOR DISADVANTAGED NORTH. FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD US GOF WOULD PROBABLY FINANCE NEW TRANSMITTER AS MEANS OF WITHDRAWING NORTHERN CONFIDENTIAL

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OPPOSITION TO MOVING OF TV STATION.

5. COMMENT: BELIEVE DENIAU VISIT WAS USEFUL IN GIVING FRENCH AND DAHOMEANS OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE TENSIONS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAVE EXISTED SINCE THE OCTOBER 1972 COUP D'ETAT. DAHOMEY HAS NOW ASSERTED HER INDEPENDENCE, AND, FRANCE HAS ACCEPTED NEW PATTERN IN RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNTRY WHICH ONE WAS ONE OF HER TAMEST CLIENT STATES. ANDERSON

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